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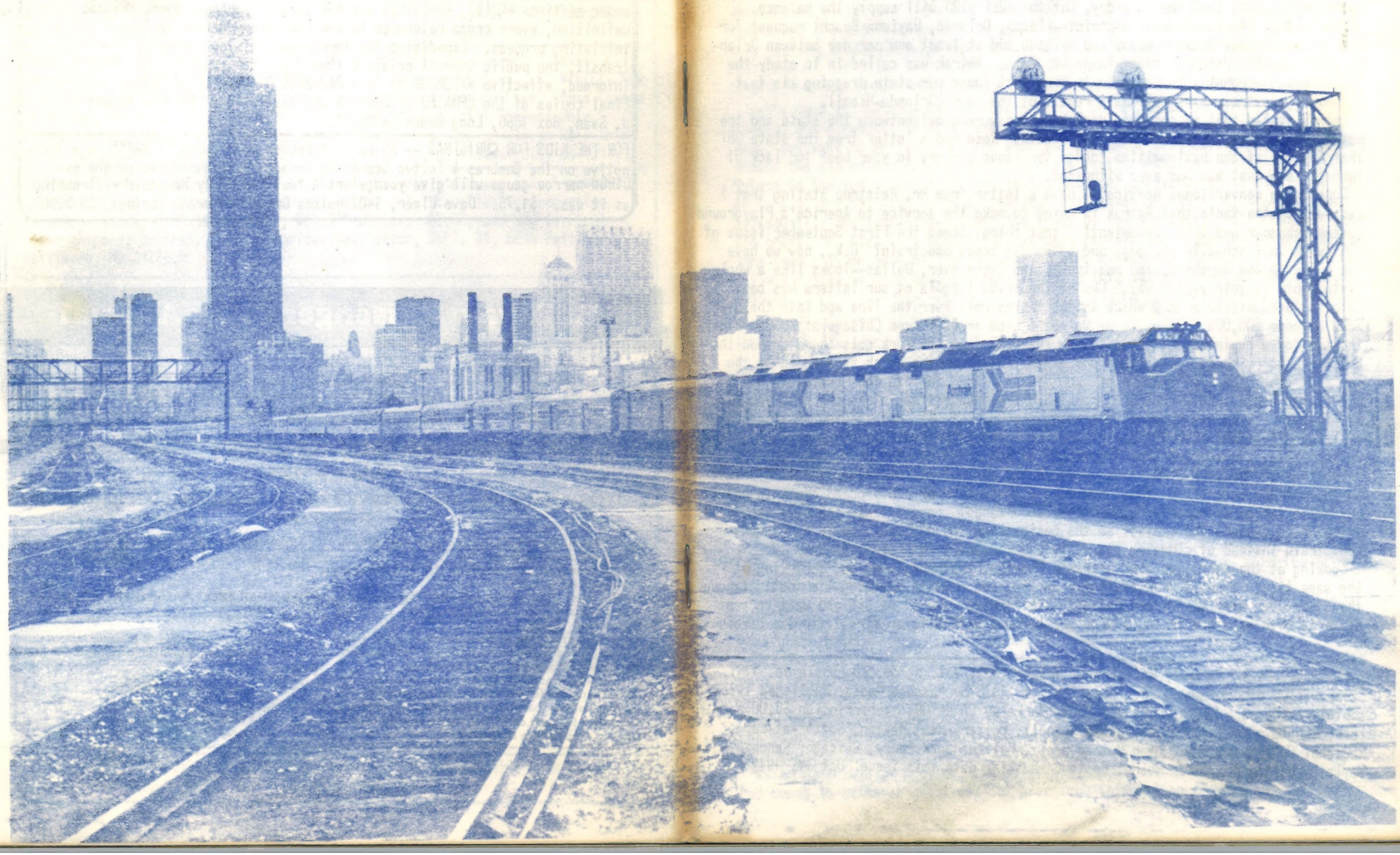


LETTERS

Now that the smoke has settled on the Atlanta-Dallas horizon, don't you think it's high time that the rail passengers all "put their money where their mouths are"? In writing a book on the history of Florida's railroads, I can't help but work with Amtrak, city, county and state, and I wonder how many Fellow Southern boys (no, I don't live in Oregon) realize the mass jam that Florida has backed into? I will try to give you a sneak preview of what has been sent to me from all offices and let you judge for yourselves whether or not the near-sighted New Englanders are on our team or not!

First, after many letters of introduction and suggestion, I gained an outline of the plans by the cities and the groups they have built. They are as follows:

The Jacksonville Transit Authority--request for 2 trains each way per day between the capitol at Tallahassee and the state's largest city, Jacksonville. This is actually supposed to be 3 trains a day, but the GULF WIND will supply the balance.

The Central Florida Transit District--(Tampa, Orlando, Daytona Beach) request for two trains per day between Miami and Orlando and at least one per day between Orlando and Tampa-St. Pete and Miami-Tampa-St. Pete. Amtrak was called in to study the routes and the results looked good to them, but found our state dragging its feet and maybe one train will roll as a result of the work (Orlando-Miami).

Amtrak stated that no concrete deal has been worked out between the state and the passenger network, so don't hold your breath! Received a letter from the state DOT that was one of the best-written "dodge the issue and cry in your beer for lack of funds" pleas that man has ever witnessed.

Concerning conventional service, I have a letter from Mr. Reistrup stating that I can publish the facts that Amtrak is going to make the service to America's Playground faster, cheaper and more convenient! First thing, comes the First September issue of RTN (with Sept schedule changes) and guess who loses one train? O.k., now we have two a day to the Northeast and one to Chicago (move over, Dallas--looks like a whole state wants to join your club). One of the prime targets of our letters has been to give Jacksonville a good shake as the trains roll over the line and into the metro area of some 800,000 people ... so we get a nice arrival from Chicago at 3:30am, just in time for a businessman's breakfast. The STAR from New York gets there around the 5 o'clock hour, which leaves that one big METEOR/CHAMP job which is sure to be the one that grabs the lion's share of our "New Clifford Lane Station" (which is not on a city bus route, and a cab fare from those mid-town railway stops can cost you $13, to mid-town! I am not talking in circles--Amtrak is! If that station is mid-town, I'll eat a timetable for the Mayor.) The northbound arrivals aren't much better for Jacksonville, considering the time to get to and from the station.

Looking for the GULF WIND, I can picture the arrival at something like 12 midnight so the patrons (all six of them) can make a short layover and proceed south to Disney World for an eye-opening 6am arrival in Orlando! Forget that--the city wanted 3 trains to connect the capitol so the businessmen and officials could hop a convenient train instead of clogging the state's under-built interstate highway 10.

Looking at the facts, we find Amtrak's Florida Fleet surviving and shrinking at the same time. I see STUPID station planning, and a state dragging its feet! I hope the other GULF WIND states are patient with Florida, and if we sit and wait on our state to give us a new train, I fear our bottoms will blister first! In the dozens

Rail Travel News (formerly Rail Travel Newsletter), Vol. 5, No. 20 (Whole No. 118). Second Issue of October, 1975. Copyright c 1975 by Message Media. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $8.00 per year; single copy 35¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Malibu; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Mailing date this issue: Oct 31, 1975.

ON THE COVER:

Amtrak train 40, the BROADWAY LIMITED, described by Amtrak president Paul Reistrup in a private memo as reminding one of an "accommodation train" (see last issue), pulls out of Chicago last July 19 with a long consist drawn by 3 engines (2 SDP40F's and an E unit). With the Oct 26 timetable changes, this train and the NATIONAL LIMITED have had their schedules lengthened to accord more closely with actual running time and erase the goose eggs from their on-time performance tables. In Amtrak's Oct 26 Midwest and East-Midwest schedules, this note is inserted pertaining to these two trains: "The above schedules are considerably slower than the Penn Central is required to provide under its contract with Amtrak. However, while work progresses to overcome deteriorated track conditions, faster schedules are impossible to achieve at this time." Photo by Jack Ferry.

upon dozens of letters their has been TALK of Ft. Myers service, Naples, Sarasota, Venice and the old Flagler System, but I hate to tell you that's all it is--TALK! I am willing to pay $1 a gallon for gas if only 25¢ worth of it would fund an alternate transit service. I have ridden the floor of a Greyhound or Trailways bus that didn't have any seats left too many times to say I can keep quiet any longer.

Let's face it, people--Amtrak will make it, but on whose terms? If you go to Florida and a handful of other states where you are headed for vacation or business, you want to arrive at a time when you can get a cab, call a hotel, poke around the stores and eat a good dinner in a restaurant before retiring to your "place in the sun." Leave Chicago in the a.m. and arrive in Jacksonville in the early p.m. and St. Pete by late evening. Maybe even an overnight STAR between Jacksonville and Tampa/Miami along the lines of the old GULF COAST SPECIAL. Sure I'm crazy, Mr. Kist (see LETTERS, First Sept issue); it's just that I want my torture over a wider span of time and during more convenient hours.

I would like to hear from anyone concerning this matter; thus you can print my address...

Robert W. Mann

35440 S.E. Hwy 211, Space #25
Boring, Oregon 97009

As your publication has followed the progress of our 403-B proposal, please let me bring you up to date on it. The study team (requested by the 1975 Legislature) recommended that a multi-modal package be implemented. This was to include:

*Extension of trains 796/797 from Portland to Eugene, with intermediate stops in Woodburn (on flag), Salem and Albany.

*Operation of a Greyhound local from Portland to Eugene, connecting with trains 795/798 at Portland's Union Station.

*Operation of a Pacific Trailways local from Corvallis to Albany on 2 round-trip connections with trains 796/797.

*Organization of a marketing program to increase public awareness of the various alternatives for travel within the Willamette Valley, in which a majority of Oregon's population is located.

On Sept 24, this proposal was approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission for presentation to the Legislature's Emergency Board (an interim joint House-Senate body which controls the release of funds) at its October meeting. On Oct 14 a request was made to delay the presentation until November. As the proposed startup date for the services was April 25, there is still time for a decision to be made.

Since the staff recommendation was made, Pacfic Trailways has indicated that it is not interested in providing the Corvallis-Albany service. However, Greyhound also has operating rights over the route, and we are hopeful that due to its other working arrangements with Amtrak that it will be able to handle both bus operations.

As an experimental project, the multi-modal combination seemed most attractive. We had hoped to gather a great deal of practical information from it, as well as using

it as a catalyst to bring a number of carriers into closer touch with each other. In addition, the Willamette Valley population centers south of Portland would have been tied into the national Amtrak system for long-distance travel in a far superior arrangement than the one currently in effect. Train 796 would have made a convenient connection in Seattle with train 8. The bus link southbound off train 795 would have made a similar connection from train 9. In the long run, the train extension had been seen as an expression of Oregon's enthusiasm for establishment of Portland-Boise-East as an Amtrak experimental route. Train 796 would have connected at Portland with any of the most likely schedules for either Portland-Boise-Ogden-Salt Lake City, or Portland-Boise-Green River-Denver. Trains 795/798 were seen as being absorbed by the Portland-Boise-East service to form a thru train from Seattle (Where Amtrak cars are based) to either Salt Lake City or Denver.

I have noted with interest the debate in your pages over priorities for short or long-haul trains. There should be no conflict. As I have described above, each should help the other. The travel needs of corridor residents are not confined to a limited geographic area or a particular type of trip. In a broader sense, regarding the question of recreational travel, is a college kid out to discover America any less worthy of subsidy than a motor boat owner operating on a Federally-built reservoir? Our recommended project attempted to strike a balance between not only modes, but travel needs.

Robert W. Rynerson
Department of Transportation
Salem, Oregon

(Ed. note: Since receipt of the above letter, pessimistic news reports from Oregon indicate that Gov. Straub feels that the state has insufficient population to support mass transit or the pilot program Mr. Rynerson described. His office also expressed concern over whether rail or bus transit should be emphasized, and called the plan "kind of schizophrenic".)

On Sunday, Oct 12 I rode the St. Louis-Chicago 4:30pm Turboliner (train 306) to Chicago... The diner, in the center car of the Turbo, was manned by a 2-man staff; in addition, a third Amtrak food service employee was serving drinks from a small vestibule facility in the second car of the 5-car train. Shortly after Bloomington, at 8pm, when the largest number of people had boarded the train, the diner staff shut down the diner, turning away all customers, and proceeded to take inventory for over 30 minutes... The two attendants eventually did allow someone to buy some food, around 8:40, and when that hurdle had been overcome, other people started buying food also.

Surely it is utterly absurd, and a waste of taxpayers' money (which subsidizes such Amtrak operations) that instead of providing food to passengers en route--which is the purpose for which the expense of providing a diner is incurred--the staff spends about one-fifth of the trip doing inventory, a function which they can perform perfectly well after the trip.

...At present, such abuse is widespread in Amtrak, and the public doesn't know that an employee doesn't have the right, for example, to shut down a snack bar when still 40 minutes out of Grand Central Station, to cite one example that I've seen. Abuses like this should be confronted head-on. Notices should be posted telling the public exactly how long food service facilities are open, and the same information should be spelled out in schedules. If employees don't provide the service they're paid to provide, a few heads should roll. Amtrak's image of professionalism would improve sharply.

Christopher Wasiutynski
New York, New York

(Ed. note: The following quote is from the First Feb 1975 issue of RTN:
Peter Bretz: "What about this problem of attendants closing early?"
Edward Buyes (Amtrak Director of on-board services): "They're not supposed to close early--it's illegal. Now we are inventorying the train in the station instead of before it arrives. The yard crew meets it, and the facility will have to be open because everything will have tobe in place for us to inventory it.")

BUS OWNERS PROTEST NEW CLEVELAND TRAIN

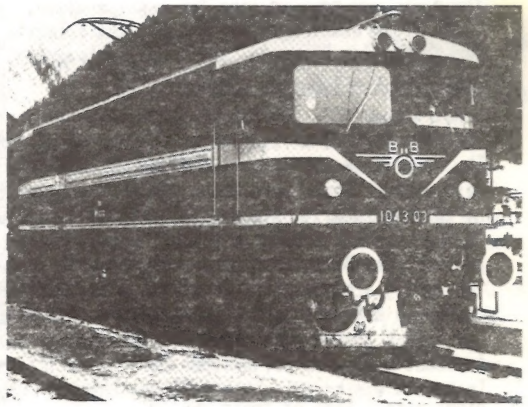
As Amtrak was preparing for the Oct 31 startup of the long-awaited LAKE SHORE LIMITED, the new Boston and New York to Chicago train via Cleveland, representatives of the nation's bus operators were registering a protest against the train and against Amtrak, calling the rail corporation "unfair competition." The bus people threatened to picket in Boston as the service started, and to hold a meeting in Washington. They claimed Amtrak is charging "two dollars less fare than in 1972."

In reply to this, Amtrak said "Competition yes; unfair no." Amtrak said it competes in fares, comfort, service, reliability and safety. However, all forms of transportation are subsidized in this country and throughout most of the world. Buses and autos could not operate without subsidies to interstate highways, local highways and streets. Amtrak said that over $450 billion has gone into roads and highways in the U.S. since 1921, and $145 billion of this sum has never been recovered from user charges. Amtrak pointed out that the public foots the bill, and while bus companies squabble over a tiny fraction of the total transportation scene, 87% of all U.S. travel is still by private auto. Amtrak called upon the bus men to stop the dickering and join them in helping create a strong, healthy intercity public transportation network. Amtrak asked the bus people to stop fighting among themselves and help go after the over-abundant auto riders and attract them off the streets, and cooperate for a total transportation service.

In answer to the lower fare charge, Amtrak said that the 1972 comparison is unfair, since that was before rail fares were adjusted and equalized over the nation (they were much higher in the East before Amtrak's equalization).

ASEA YES, GE NO?

Amtrak may soon be running locomotives in the Colonial Corridor that resemble this Swedish-built electric engine.



ASEA photo

Amtrak announced Oct 30 that it will lease a high-speed, light weight Swedish locomotive built by ASEA for testing between Washington and New Haven. Returning from his European trip, on which leasing arrangements were made, Amtrak president Paul Reistrup said "It is essential that Amtrak use the best passenger train technology in the world to provide improved inter-city service to the American public."

The 6-month lease, with option for 6 more months, will give Amtrak one model Rc4 6000hp electric locomotive for trials with the Amcoaches in the Corridor. A $215,000 modification is included in the $750,000 price. The 180,000-lb engine weighs less than half as much as comparable American machines. The 4-axle loco is equipped with an advanced thyristor control system--an "early warning" wheel slip control device that detects the beginning of wheel slippage and cuts off power to those wheels, enabling the lightweight loco to provide powerful acceleration with relatively heavy loads. The engine will do a maximum of 120mph. ASEA thyristor locos are in use in Sweden, Austria, and Rumania, and the control devices have been ordered by British Rail for

use in its Advanced Passenger Train. The manufacturer claims its locos can handle trains of 25% greater weight than can conventional electric engines.

The leased engine will be off the assembly line next summer, and then shipped to this country. If Amtrak ultimately decides to purchase such engines, they can be manufactured in this country, since EMD division of General Motors is licensed to build them here.

Altho Amtrak refused to confirm the report, Washington Star transportation writer Stephen Aug found that the reason for the interest in the Swedish machine is disenchantment with the GE electric locos now on order. The 26 GE engines apparently have shown safety problems in DOT tests. While they're supposed to reach 120mph, the engines give "high lateral forces on the rail" and side-to-side vibrations at speeds over 80. The DOT has not yet approved them, altho all 26 locos on order have been built to some degree of completion. FRA head Asaph Hall said that he is hopeful the machines can be reworked to perform satisfactorily, with altered suspension systems. In its test program, the DOT's FRA has tried out the GE electrics, P30 diesels, GG1s and SDP40Fs. A GE E60 electric derailed at 100mph at Elkton, MD in DOT tests. The Swedish engine has the same horsepower but about half the weight of the GE design.

STRIKE HALTS PASSENGER TRAINS ON SP LINES

Members of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks walked off the job the evening of Oct 16 on SP lines, causing Amtrak service on those lines and SP's San Francisco commuter runs to terminate. SP promptly obtained a court order that brought service back about 24 hours later. Trains were running normally by Oct 18. The court order is in effect until Nov 21.

AMTRAK'S NEXT EXPERIMENTAL ROUTE

At least one U.S. Senator is convinced that the next yearly experimental route to be selected by Amtrak will be Portland-Boise-Denver. Sen. Robert Packwood of Oregon told the press late this month that after a meeting with president Paul Reistrup and several other Western Senators, he believes that next April or May Amtrak will annouce selection ofthe new Western route. He said that Reistrup strongly implied that the route was next in line for consideration. The last route selected, before the legal requirement that Amtrak make the selection (instead of the DOT), was the Denver-Washington DC route, still not implemented.

THREE-TRAIN METROLINER CRASH

Metroliner 132, the 5pm train from Washington to Philadelphia, was struck from the rear by PC local Wilmington train 944, derailing 4 cars of each train, on Oct 17. The Metroliner was then sideswiped by southbound Wilmington local 939, carrying six passengers. There were about 300 on the Metroliner, and an unknown number on the northbound local. Railroad investigators charged the engineer of the local with failure to heed a warning signal, and suspended him. About 26 people had minor injuries. The Metroliner apparently stopped because of a short in its electrical system during a heavy rain, about two miles north of the Wilmington station. The short caused an automatic brake application. The 944 was traveling at 30mph when it hit the Amtrak train, doing very little apparent damage to the Metroliner, but pushing in about 8 feet of Silverliner car 252, a 127-seat coach built by Budd in 1963. Train 944 was carrying about 20 passengers. One report said all 6 Metro cars derailed along with 2 cars of train 944.

MEXICO CITY SUBWAY WRECK

A rear-end train collision in Mexico's subway Oct 20 killed about 26 people and injured "dozens" of others. There were conflicting reports, but it appears that a passenger pulled an emergency cord that stopped a train when someone was caught in a closing door. Another train hit the rear of the train stopped in the station, and the driver of the oncoming train was charged with manslaughter and negligence, altho there appeared to be doubt that warning lights and automatic braking devices were functioning properly.

ABOARD THE "ADVANCE LAKE SHORE LIMITED"

by Bill McDonald

RIDE WITH US ON THE PILOT RUN OF AMTRAK TRAIN 449 OUT OF BOSTON, AS PENN CENTRAL ENGINE MAN BILL MCDONALD BRINGS A TRAINLOAD OF OFFICIALS ON AN INSPECTION TOUR

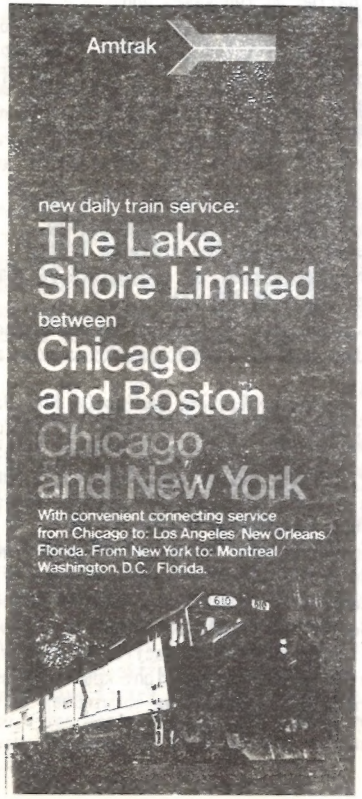
October 7 began as a brisk, 53-degree morning. The sun rose in a cloudless sky over Boston to reveal what might be called Advance 449--Amtrak engine 601, coach 5803, and Penn Central private cars 5, 6, and 76. The consist on track 14 of the forelorn South Station was awaiting its 7am departure time for an inspection of the route of Amtrak's next new trains--449/49 & 448/48, the LAKE SHORE LIMITED.

With a host of Penn Central, Amtrak, and (so I was told) ConRail officials aboard, departure came at 7:02am. We made a simulated passenger stop at Back Bay. Then we slowly moved thru the Prudential Center Tunnel and gradually accelerated to the 30mph limit between Back Bay and Beacon Park Yard at mile post 3.

Once past m.p. 3, our speed climbed to the 50mph limit permitted over the rest of the old Boston & Albany. It wasn't enough to maintain an even pace with the traffic on the parallel Massachusetts Turnpike, but certainly better than 30mph.

Surprised looks greeted the unexpected passing of this unusual train, as we passed waiting commuters at "stations"--or more appropriately, platforms--thru Wellesley, Natick, and Framingham. We made another simulated stop at Worcester, where a new station is being constructed.

At Springfield, where we simulated another stop, a crew of carpenters were at work repairing the platform canopy adjacent to track 2. Presumably the platform at track 1 will receive similar attention, and an additional section of the subway portion of the old Springfield station will be reopened so that passengers will be able to reach the stairway leading to track 1.



Since it was a Tuesday morning, freight traffic on the usually quite busy B&A appeared rather light. Eastbound trains were passed at Westboro (m.p. 31) and Palmer (m.p. 83), where the CV crosses the B&A in an interesting fashion--on a "diamond."

Two westbound trains were waiting in West Springfield Yard for our passage before beginning their runs over the Berkshires to Selkirk Yard just south of Albany. Two more westbound freights were overtaken as we passed thru Pittsfield on the eastbound track. We returned to the westbound track at m.p. 150 on the west side of Pittsfield, only to return to the eastbound at E. Chatham, NY (m.p. 172). This time it was to "run around" a track crew installing ribbon rail thru Chatham.

Across the 192 miles of B&A trackage, three areas of major track repair work were in evidence--the first two on track 2 east of Palmer and west of Chester, Mass; the third area on track 1 in Chatham, NY. Track repair on the B&A is a pressing need. While the roadbed is well ballasted and completely free of weeds, thus appearing sound, at least from a distance, the riding quality above 40-50mph leaves much to be desired. Close inspection reveals con-

siderable wear at the rail joints--a consequence of the ten or more thru freight trains that visit the line in each direction on a typical day, and of course the usual practice of deferred maintenance.

If the speed on the B&A is nothing to thril one, there are consolations. One is the if not spectacular, certainly picturesque scenery across Massachusetts, particularly west of the Connecticut River in the Berkshires. On an autumn day with the display of color at its peak, the views are captivating.

Also of interest, particularly to the history buff, are the constant reminders that this was the B&A railroad. Numerous long-abandoned freight houses can be seen conspicuously painted "Boston & Albany Freight Station." The dormant passenger depots are quite distinctive architecturally. A number have found new uses, as is rather common these days. With but few exceptions, they were well built. Stone was commonly used, and as expected, shows little sign of age. For the visitor to Boston, a meal at the Alston Depot is worthwhile both for the food and for the railroad motif that is featured. This was, not unexpectedly, the B&A depot in the Alston section of Boston, which is just across the Charles River from Cambridge.

The viewing came to a climax at 12:33pm when we came to a halt at what is called C.P. SM. This is the remotely controlled interlocking at the east end of the Castleton Bridge which spans the Hudson River at approximately 150 feet. To the north the skyline of Albany some 12 miles away can be easily seen.

Following the brief stop at C.P. SM to pick up a Hudson Division crew, we began the circumnavigation of the infamous 12-mile hiatus. In what hindsight has shown to be one of its poorer decisions, Amtrak, under its former president, approved the Penn Central's removal of 12 miles of track between Rensselaer (Albany) and Post Road, NY. The basis for the decision was the assertion that Amtrak would not be using the route in the future. The rails were pulled up two years ago.

At 12:42pm, three blasts from the horn signalled the first "switchback" move from C.P. SM eight miles south to Stuyvesant on the Hudson Division main line. The top speed on the move is 30mph, with a 10mph slow order for one mile. In total, 30 minutes were consumed. No sooner had the 601 cleared the interlocking limits, than the switch points were lined for the straight move on track 1. The "home board" cleared to a high green and we were on our way on the last 18 miles and the only relatively speedy portion of the run.

Arrival in Rensselaer was at 1:31pm, for a running time of 6 hours, 29 minutes. Anyone familiar with railroading in this area will attest to the embarrassing lethargy of such time. The new train is scheduled to cover the distance in six hours, 20 minutes. Unless some speed limits are liberalized, my conjecture is that tardiness will be the rule for the new train, at least on the B&A.

Shown below is the running time of the pilot train over the entire Boston-Chicago route. It will be apparent that the running time west of Albany was not as poor as one might have expected.

First day: Boston 7:02am; Framingham 7:40am; Worcester 8:15am; Springfield ar 9:44 am, lv 9:46am; Pittsfield 11:20am; Post Rd. 12:25pm; C.P. SM ar 12:33pm, lv 12:42pm; Albany ar 1:31pm, lv 1:36pm; Utica ar 3:22pm, lv 3:23pm; Syracuse ar 4:08pm, lv 4:11 pm; Rochester ar 5:41pm, lv 5:42pm; Buffalo ar 7:04pm. Second day: Buffalo lv 6am; Bay View Jct 6:30am; Erie lv 7:55am; Ashtabula 8:31am; Collinwood lv 9:28am; Breia Jct 10:03am; Toledo lv 11:48am; Elkhart lv 2:40pm; Chicago ar 3:40pm.

The total running time of 22 hrs 40 min is approximately 2 hours faster than the scheduled running time of the new train, so the trains should run on time west of Albany. I would hesitate to predict the timekeeping or patronage prospects on the B&A portion of the run. All one can do is hope for the provision by Amtrak of amenities other than speed. Perhaps attractive lounge and dining facilities may help pass the time across Massachusetts. And while we're hoping, we might keep in mind that restoration of the missing 12 miles of track will easily save 45 minutes to an hour just between Post Rd. and Rensselaer.

THE EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS STOPS AT ST. THOMAS

by Duane W. Roller

On a cool but brilliantly clear Sunday morning, I traveled to St. Thomas, Ontario, to witness the first revenue stop of Amtrak's EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS. Altho there were no signs, the large, two-story Penn Central station and offices are a St. Thomas landmark, and the building was not difficult to find. The waiting room was unlocked, but the only indication of train service--and the only change from the previous week --were four crudely handwritten signs indicating that tickets must be purchased on the train, that there was no intra-Canadian travel, and a condensed schedule. Inside the waiting room was the old bulletin board, reading "New York Central System" and showing a train 29 from Boston and a train 33 from New York. Seemingly it had been left since May 1, 1971.

About 15 people gathered, but it soon turned out that all were from the press. There was a desperate--and unsuccessful--attempt to find a passenger, and when an elderly lady appeared and announced that she was meeting two passengers, she was descended upon as the most newsworthy event so far.

Shortly after 9:50am, a headlight appeared to the west, and at 9:55am No. 64 drew to a stop. It was pulled by Penn Central unit 262, and consisted of 5 cars: baggage 1066, coaches 6414 and 6411; diner 8341; and coach 6429. The rear coach was opened and the expected two passengers descended. Since some of the press were at the engine at this point, the couple was soon asked to recreate the historic event, which they did.

The conductor was affable, and said that there had been 50 passengers out of Detroit, including the two at St. Thomas, but none at Windsor. Canadian passengers, he said, were forced to ride in the rear coach while the train was in Canada, and could not use the diner (altho a waiter would come and take orders and bring food). A Canadian immigration inspector rides the train across Canada. The conductor was fairly critical of the Canadian government, pointing out the ease of the operation in pre-Amtrak days as contrasted with the year's difficulties, still not resolved, in getting permission to stop in Canada. He also was critical of Amtrak for not promoting the new service but was optimistic about its future. On time at 10:02am, No. 64 departed, with cameras clicking and whirring.

As the train left, a local television reporter said to me, "It seems the angle to this story is Amtrak's lack of interest in its service." A cameraman added, "Sure is a big nothing, isn't it?" Even if St. Thomas is not one of the big points in the Amtrak system, one wonders why there was no Amtrak person on the scene, why the only publicity was in an occasional (and often erroneous) news report, and why it was not possible, and still is not possible, for people in St. Thomas and nearby London to get timetables, other information, or even an Amtrak telephone number.

LAND OF LEXAN

Recent observations of Amtrak passenger cars equipped with unbreakable Lexan in place of glass reinforces our conclusion that this alarming alteration is one of the most undesirable moves Amtrak has made. Altho its manufacturer, General Electric Plastics Business Division of Pittsfield, Mass. claims that the material is "as colorless and transparent as high quality glass", such is by no means the case. Altho Amtrak has found that scenery viewing is one of the prime motivations for rail travel, and is one of the top selling points mentioned in its ads, it persists in installing this material that renders window areas virtually worthless for sightseeing. Recently in an ex-SP coach used on the SAN JOAQUIN we made a photograph of the view thru two adjacent windows simultaneously--one of good glass and one of Lexan. The difference was striking, but unfortunately our film was spoiled, and we will have to try again to illustrate this difference. While break resistance may be often desirable, we also have a report of a recent derailment in which rescuers were hampered in their efforts because they could not break thru train windows.

--J.R.

CARS & CONSISTS

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 31 at Paoli, PA Oct 16: engine 910; baggage 1036; sleepers 2633, 2796; diner 8024; sleeper-lounge 3201; coaches 5474, 5674, 5444.

*MINUTE MAN, train 170, Oct 3: power car 1299; Amcoaches 21030, 21009; Amcafe 20004; Amcoaches 21008, 21023.

*SENATOR, train 177, Oct 11: parlor car 3632 "Henry Knox", galley lounge 3321 (ex-PC parlor car 7143); coaches 5647, 5642, 5667; PC coaches 1522, 1510.

*RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, D&RGW train 18, Sept 28: 1230 coach-baggage combine; coach "Silver Aspen", coach "Silver Pine", dome coach "Silver Pony", dome coach "Silver Bronco", dome coach "Silver Mustang", diner "Silver Banquet", dome sleeper lounge "Silver Sky."

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 31 at Kansas City Oct 21: engines 599, 471 (A), 233 (B); baggage 1161; sleepers 2611 "Pacific Forest" (L.A. sleeper), 2796 "Union County"; diner 8061; sleeper 3201 "Woodland Stream"; coaches 5474, 6574, 5444, 5463.

*JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY/MOUNTAINEER, train 50-54, at Muncie Oct 9: engines 602, 609; cars 1037, 1531, 5673, 5628, 5669, 8111, 2016, (MOUNTAINEER section:) 2155, 8200, 5241, 6070, 6054, 6082.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 440 at Paoli, PA Oct 23: engine 919; slumbercoaches 2021, 2003; coaches 5264, 5263, 5268; lounge 3401; diner 8804-8805; sleepers 2290, 2556; baggage 1159.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, at San Jose Oct 1: engines 566, 551; baggage 1005; bag-dorm 1510; coaches 4492, 4544, 4506, 4495; lunch counter diner 8106; coaches 4872, 4852; lounge 3370; diner 8033; sleepers 2750 "Palm Arch", 2726 "Pine Mesa." Same train & location, Oct 6: engines 557, 554; baggage 1065; bag-dorm 1501; coaches 4519, 4821, 4815, 4855, 4491, 4820; lounge 3351; diner 8038; sleepers 2723 "Pine King", 2621 "Pacific Northwest." Train 14, Oct 14: engines 558, 556; cars 1065, 1510, 4519, 4864, 4815, 4855, 4491, 4820, 3351, 8038, 2713 "Pine Cavern", 2621 "Pacific Northwest", 2215 "Indian Maid", coach 4482 deadheading.

*SAN JOAQUIN, train 710, Oct 18: engines 110, 116; coaches 7518, 7506; lunch counter diner 8503; coach 7515 ex-SP unrefurbished.

*Football Special, Milwaukee-Madison roundtrip Oct 25, sponsored by Milwaukee Athletic Club and Charter Wire Corp.: engines 408, 435; 9814 "Silver Kettle"; 6450, 6452, 4857, 4881, 4461, 4527, 4483, 4546, 4537, private car "Golden Moon" sleeper of Charter Wire Corp., and "Imperial Leaf" (similar car).

*ABE LINCOLN, first run, Chicago-St. Louis Oct 26: (train 303) engines 421, 465; 4841, 4840, 5801, 5803, 5802, 8320, 3770 "Port of Seattle" with "Abe Lincoln" drumhead. (Train is based in St. Louis.)

*ADIRONDACK, train 68, at New York Oct 21: FL9 engines 5013, 5014; D&H cars 41 "Saratoga Inn", 34 "Whiteface Mountain", Amtrak 6448.

*Four GE diesels are to be sent to the Midwest for use on the ILLINI and the ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, says a report. By spring, all F units on the Amtrak system are expected to be out of service. Eight are being held temporarily for the RENO FUN TRAIN and the SAN JOAQUIN. The KEYSTONE train is up for sale by Amtrak. (The GE diesels for the Midwest are numbered 702-705.)

*The Empire Service may be the last stronghold for E units, reports reader R. Beeman, who sends this list of all Amtrak E's that have operated there: 258 (ex-PC NYC 4040); 259 (ex-PC NYC 4041; 262 (ex-PC NYC 4045); 263 (ex-PC NYC 4047); 264 (ex-PC NYC 4048); 265 (ex-PC NYC 4049); 266(ex-PC NYC 4051); 267 (ex-PC NYC 4052); 268 (ex-PC NYC 4053); 269 (ex-PC NYC 4054); 270(ex-PC NYC 4055); 271 (ex-PC NYC 4056); 272 (ex-PC NYC 4057); 273 (ex-PC NYC 4058); 275(ex-PC NYC 4060); 276 (ex-PC NYC 4061); 216 (ex-RF&P 1007); 224 (ex-L&N 794); 249 (ex-SCL SAL 592, 3053); 291 (ex-PC PRR 4283); 328 (ex-UP 932); 415 (ex-UP 910); 425 (ex-UP 948); 427 (ex-UP 953); 428 (ex-UP 955); 430 (ex-UP 957); 255 (ex-PC NYC 4020, rebuilt E7A). All engines listed operated thru Syracuse, NY.

THE POSTAL SERVICE DOES IT AGAIN!!

Yes, the U.S. Postal Service is hitting us for another first class rate increase--a 30% rise effective December 28.

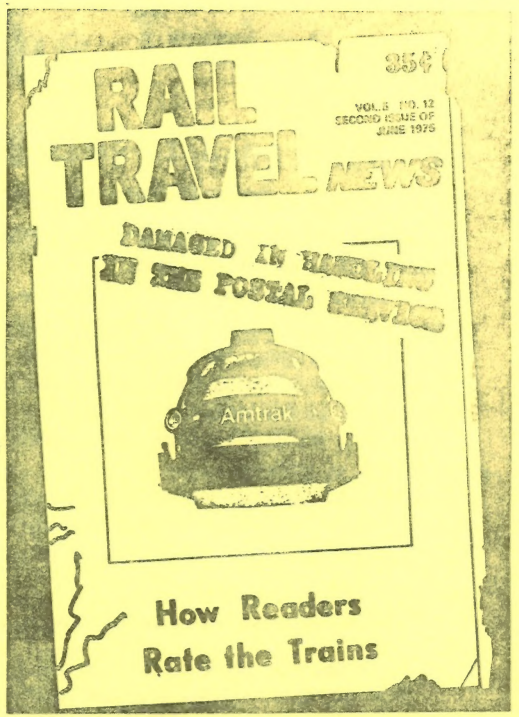
This means it will cost us 13¢ per copy instead of 10¢ to mail RTN to each subscriber twice each month.

And of course all our other postage expenses, such as billing, will also go up.

We have no alternative but to raise the yearly subscription rate to offset this massive inflationary blow.

BUT

be of good cheer. We know that this does not mean the end of RTN. We know that the vast majority of RTN's loyal readers would rather pay a little more than do without their twice-monthly rail news.



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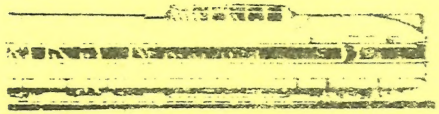
Rate the Trains



SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF OUR FIRST READER TRAIN RATING SURVEY IN THE SECOND APRIL ISSUE, AND PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS BEGINNING IN THE SECOND JUNE RTN, NO OTHER RTN FEATURE HAS CREATED SUCH AN ENTHUSIASTIC READER RESPONSE--SO MUCH SO THAT WE HAD TO MAKE THE SURVEY A REGULAR EVENT IN RTN. WE WILL RUN A SURVEY TWICE A YEAR. OUR SECOND ONE IS COMING UP. THE DETAILS ARE BELOW.

Readers are invited to submit their ratings and comments on North American regularly scheduled passenger trains ridden between mid-June and mid-December, 1975. Results will be published in RTN at the close of this year.

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS: Rate as many trains as you wish. Rate each train on each of the 11 categories listed below:

A. Overall quality of service, taking everything into account.
B. Service from on-board train personnel (except food service personnel).
C. Service from dining, snack or lounge crew.
D. Quality of food offered aboard the train.
E. Condition of cars used (cleanliness, repair, etc.).
F. Desirability of the particular route it follows.
G. Quality of station services along the route.
H. Condition of the track and roadbed along the route.
I. Desirability of present scheduling of the train.
J. Train promotion--how well is it advertised or promoted?
K. Desirability of type of cars used on the train.

Use a 9-point scale for your ratings, as follows: 1= extremely poor; 9 = extremely good; 5 (scale mid-point) = average, acceptable. You need not make a rating on each of the above 11 items, but list all 11 letters (A-K) for each train, and place your rating number beside each letter, leaving blank those categories you can't rate. Place your number rating, from 1-9, beside each category letter.

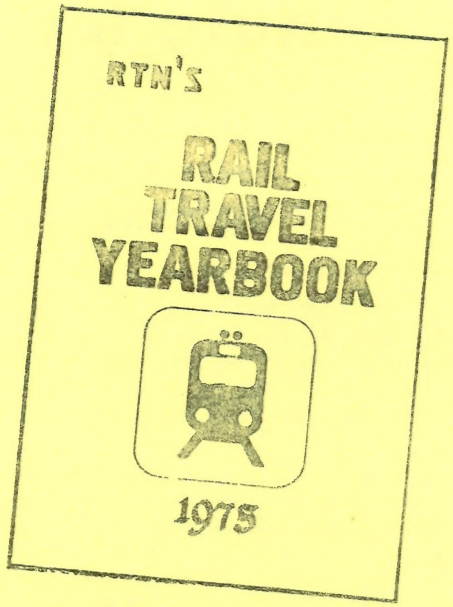
Please do your ratings on a piece of paper or card separate from any other business or editorial correspondence. Add whatever comments you wish after your ratings. Include your name and address and indicate whether we can use your name if we publish any of your comments.

A few people have asked what should be their basis for judgments--the ideal train, the best train under the present circumstances, etc. Our answer is: use your own judgment. That way the results will reflect rider satisfaction based on the riders' own internal criteria. This will give the most useful information, since riders' personal satisfaction is what determines the amount of business a train generates.

We are accepting ratings of Auto-Train and Canadian trains, along with Amtrak and non-Amtrak American passenger trains.

SEND YOUR RATINGS TO: Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you.

Out Soon



ON NOVEMBER 22 WE ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SHIPMENT, IN ORDER RECEIVED, OF RTN'S FIRST RAIL TRAVEL YEARBOOK. BE SURE YOUR ORDER IS IN, FOR EARLY DELIVERY.

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The Yearbook is $3.50 per copy postpaid (California customers add tax of 21¢ per copy, or 23¢ in BART counties). Use order blank below or a separate sheet.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Now you can go directly to Boston, Chicago, New York (and many cities in between) without flying or driving. Using the Lake Shore Limited, business people, students and vacationers can travel to--and stop over--in major cities with greater convenience and economy than ever before... You come and go easily--directly--avoiding all the inconveniences and hassles of flying or driving."

--From Amtrak's route brochure for the LAKE SHORE LIMITED

Urban - Suburban Transit

A DISASTROUS FIRE in SEPTA's Woodland Avenue car house in the early morning hours of Oct 23 destroyed 54 PCC streetcars of the transit authority's fleet of 250, plus about 7 other work cars, including the "Hog Island" car scheduled to be restored for the Bicentennial. Damage was estimated at $30 million. Philadelphia will use buses in place of the lost PCC cars, and an official said it would be 3-4 years before the streetcars can be replaced.

NEWS OF BART: The transitagency announced Oct 23 the appointment of Robert D. Gallaway, 41, as head of operations. He comes from Texas International Airlines, where he guided operations since 1972. The system announced late this month that it will extend evening operation from the present 8pm closing up to midnight, starting Nov 28. The added 4 hours daily (there is no weekend operation) will continue thru the fiscal year, since federal funds have become available to finance the longer service. Nov 3 will see some fare increases on BART--in the case of Berkeley, a 31% increase for a transbay trip to San Francisco, or 42% higher than the faster AC Transit bus.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION announced Oct 24 the funding of a $100,000 study with the U.S. Geological Survey of the geological and hydrologic conditions in downtown Los Angeles and adjacent areas as they would affect tunneling for a mass transit system.

NEW YORK CITY received from UMTA at the start of October $66 million in federal grants to pay half the deficit from operating expenses on the city's transit systems and the PC's Harlem, Hudson and New Haven lines, the EL Hoboken-Port Jervis service, and the Long Island Rail Road. State and local funds must cover the other half of the costs.

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SUBURBAN Mass Transit District is to make a decision on bids submitted this month for construction of electric Highliner commuter cars. Among the bids were two from Canadian builders: from Bombardier-MLW-Worthington, $756,400 per car; and from Hawker Siddeley, $925,000 each. Bids were also received from Pullman-Standard, General Electric, and Mitsubishi International (Tokyu Car Corp.).

THE ROHR CORPORATION hopes it can deliver 28 transit cars to the Washington Metro system by the end of November. Rohr said it may lose substantially more money on the car order and blamed the Transit Authority in part for the delays it is having.

IN AN INTERVIEW with William J. Ronan, president of the American Public Transit Association, Mass T ransit magazine has quoted the prominent transport figure as saying that development of public transit depends on getting back to reality. Said Ronan: "It is a fact that the aerospace industry never really appreciated the environment of public trnasport and the rigors of it... This has been one of the problems of our new systems, whether it be BART in San Francisco, Morgantown, or the people-mover at the Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport." He said that transit systems looking for immediate improvement cannot gamble on futuristic, untried vehicles. He added, "Some civic leaders have got to recognize that in planning a new transit system they are not going to invent a new wheel... Don't laugh, there has been an awful lot of that thing."

Rail Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL HAS received permission to eliminate its Toronto-Guelph commuter trains. The runs were originally slated to be ended when GO Train service began between Toronto and Georgetown (a closer-in point on the same route), but were ordered continued by the CTC. GO officials said improved bus connections would be started Guelph-Georgetown.

PIERRE DELAGRAVE, the hustling former CN passenger vice-president who led CN's passenger resurgence in the 1960s, has reappeared on the passenger train scene after an absence of several years. Delagrave has been appointed to the marketing consortium that is beginning to make large scale efforts to sell the newly developed LRC passenger train. Delagrave is best remembered for his promotion efforts that doubled CN passenger revenues in the 5-year period 1962-67 with such concepts as the Rapido trains, red-white-blue fares, and a major "image" rehabilitation for CN.

THE FEDERAL CABINET in Ottawa this fall will mull purchase of new passenger train equipment for CN. Recent cancellation of the Toronto Pickering super-airport by veto of the Ontario Provincial government has given purchase of new rail cars added priority, accordingto insiders. Garth Campbell, CN passenger vice-president, said recently that CN would have to scrap 50 old passenger cars this year, or 15% of the remaining active fleet. Campbell said CN has no funds to buy new passenger equipment, due to the capital squeeze, and because most passenger runs are deficit operations. Previously, Campbell had estimated that operating costs for CN passenger runs could be cut 30% with new equipment.

CANADA'S UP-AND-DOWN PASSENGER situation may be momentarily "up" as of late fall. Newly appointed federal Transport Minister Otto Lang was quoted by the press as saying "I start with the belief that railways should remain in the passenger business." Lang said that, as of the moment, he intends to "at least keep the passenger system functioning." Apparently plans to cut CP Rail's CANADIAN and CN's SUPER CONTINENTAL to tri-weekly operation have been temporarily shelved. The influential Toronto Globe & Mail reported on Sept 15 that these cutbacks were possible at the end of October. Lang said he was immediately interested in better scheduling, coordination between the two major lines on passenger matters, and an improvement of marketing programs. Higher speeds and new equipment will have to wait, Lang told reporters.

VANCOUVER'S HASTINGS STREET may see streetcar operation once again, according to officials of the B.C. government's Bureau of Transit. Studies are being made to determine the feasibility of operating articulated streetcar trains over the busy route, which is now nearing capacity as a "bus" street. Until the 1950s, Hastings had been a busy streetcar route of the old B.C. Electric Co. One articulated train could replace as many as five buses, and operate over former interurban rights-of-way to Burnaby, with buses retained only for local service in curb lanes.

B.C. STEAMSHIP COMPANY has announced a tentative 1976 season schedule for the former CN Alaska cruiseliner "Prince George." Under her new owners, the "George" will make weekly sailings from Vancouver, BC to Ketchikan, Alaska, departing 7:30pm Saturdays, returning 4:30pm Fridays June 14-Sept 24. The northbound voyage will cruise Knight Inlet, and make calls at Ocean Falls and Pt. Simpson. The southbound trip will call at Prince Rupert, Alert Bay and cruise Howe Sound. Sketches shown to the press in Seattle Sept 29 indicated the ship's new colour scheme will be much like that now worn by "Princess Marguerite."

PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL reports that Mr. Harvey Dust of 55 St. John St. South, St. Marys, Ontario NOM 2VO, is interested in hearing from Canadian citizens who would like to form a rail passenger lobby group to work for improved Canadian service.

FORMER CP RAIL mini-liner "Princess Elizabeth", now moored in Scotland, is among some older vessels being considered for the Victoria-Port Angeles, Wash. service.

A DAY ON THE CARIBOU DAYLINER

by Pete Roehm and Eric Watson

During the final week of August we ventured by air to the Far Northwest to savor a few rail lines. Wednesday morning was heavily overcast in Vancouver as we arose amidst the dark dawn spiced occasionally with drizzle in the true Northwest style. The morning Sun commented that the BC Railway was to be struck at about noon, but a call to the railway station assured us, as had a friend on the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL the day before, that the CARIBOU DAYLINER would be running thru to Prince George.

Thus to our taxi and on to the North Vancouver station, a modern affair tucked almost out of sight not far from the bridge over the First Narrows between Stanley Park and North Vancouver. There is a special bus, for a fee, from downtown Vancouver, but with the rain, we chose the faster cab which provided us an opportunity to photograph the train unobstructed by other passengers and to obtain our reserved seat tickets free of a long line. We also checked our larger bags thru rather than maneuver them aboard the Budd car. Passengers soon began to trickle in, followed by the bus, and then the deluge began: campers, Indians, tourists, railfans, and other descriptive types. The small station took on an appearance of a mini-Grand Central.

Our seats were in BC-33, the lead RDC-3 (and one of 4 of this model owned by the BC), with the seats reclining, whereas the 3 RDC-1's following were the standard pull-over variety that I encounter daily on the Boston & Maine. Our young hostess checked our seat coupons and we relaxed a bit before departure which would find 95% of our car filled and a good patronage of the 3 rear coaches. We departed a bit late, but no one seemed to mind, as the day was set aside entirely for the 12-hour ride north. The couple across the aisle were from Zurich and enroute to visit their son in Sitka via the CN at Prince George and the ferry from Prince Rupert; a proper British gentleman sat behind them and was wrapping up a lengthy tour of the Dominion before returning to Britain.

Howe Sound was cloaked in heavy clouds but still beautiful as the train proceeded "north to Alaska" (someday!) or at least in that general direction. The second hostess, actually the chef, was up front in the galley section of the baggage compartment warming the grill for the preparation of our hot breakfast which would be served to "first class" passengers only. The extra fee of $7 entitles one to the reserved reclining seat plus 3 hot meals served at your seat. A good deal, and a help during the long ride ahead. Rather than being airline style, they are cooked from fresh ingredients on board and served fresh and hot. Breakfast would be sausages, scrambled eggs, bran muffins, orange juice, and coffee-tea-milk. All things considered, it was very good; and better than Amtrak's offering the night before on the "P.I."

Lillooet, division point on the BC, is reached just after lunch hour, and much beautiful lake and mountain scenery, and it is here that the train is severed in half. The first 2 cars (RDC-3 and one RDC-1) go on to Prince George (tri-weekly) and the rear 2 cars (RDC-1's) return to Vancouver as train 2 daily. The stop takes but 10 minutes, and then it is off and climbing and time for lunch, which consists of two amply stuffed cabbage (rice and beef), salad, vegetable, rolls, nut bread, apple juice, and the usual coffee-tea-milk. Again, very good.

Lillooet sits at an elevation of 793 feet and within 40 miles we are at 2706 feet, mile post 183, and the point called Moran, where the Fraser River runs some 2000 feet below us. One can only imagine what winter must be like around here as the train clings to the side of the mountains and timber trestles still exist, altho some have been abandoned in favor of hillside grades. Must be fun! From Moran we continue to climb to Horse Lake, mile post 243, elevation 3864 feet, and the highest point reached by the railroad. Then it is all downhill to Quesnel, once the northern terminal of the line, but not before crossing the 312-foot-high Deep Creek trestle, said to be one of the world's highest. Quesnel is now a major lumber shipping point.

Dinner is then served, and consists of 3 large meatballs in gravy with a large scoop of mashed potatoes plus tossed salad, peas, rolls, tomato juice, and date bar, plus the coffee-tea-milk routine. Again a good feed.

We certainly could not complain about the meal service and definitely not about the scenery nor the spectacular nature of the railroad itself. This line should be a must on anyone's list. If you go, be sure to reserve a seat in advance so that you can relax and be fed by a lovely young cook and another lovely young hostess. These girls are apparently employed by the catering firm hired by the BC to provide the meal service.

Arrival in Prince George was on time, and there was a bus, airport-style, meeting the train to deliver passengers to their respective sleeping quarters, downtown meeting spots, or the CN station (CN trains are due within the following 2 hours). We checked in at our TraveLodge and were then up at 5am to catch Northern Thunderbird Airline's swanky DC-3 for the south.

The CARIBOU DAYLINER looked like the photo below about five weeks later (see last issue) after it struck a logging truck near Quesnel on Oct 2. Photo courtesy of The Province (Vancouver).

THIS ISSUE OF RTN will be delivered late to our Canadian readers, since the Canadian Post Office was shut down by a strike in the last week of October. The U.S. Postal Service, as we go to press, is still embargoing mail to Canada.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK HAS PRODUCED a very attractive route brochure for the new LAKE SHORE LIMITED, the front of which is illustrated on p.7. In the rush to get to press, we couldn't fix a problem in our photo: the words "Amtrak introduces" dropped out of the picture just under the logo, since the magenta wording did not reproduce on our film. We particularly like this brochure because the descriptions of points on the route tell you things you want to know, unlike the old blurbs that gave you only dull statistics --how many tons of coal a town produced per year, etc. See also QUOTES OF THE WEEK ..... THE PROPOSED CRITERIA for selecting routes, prepared by Amtrak for Congressional approval, include 3 sets of criteria--economic, social and environmental. The economic criteria are: financial contribution per revenue passenger mile; total financial contribution; incremental capital investment requirements; return on incremental investment; and financial impact on connecting parts of the system. Social criteria: population served; individuals currently using the route or service; population deprived of or provided with rail service; availability of alternate modes; impact on personal safety. Environmental criteria: change in energy consumed; change in pollutants generated; and land freed for or removed from alternative use.....

* * *

LEXAN LIVES DEPARTMENT: The Budd Company is promoting the use of Lexan in its current trade-journal advertising hawking construction of the 492 Amcoaches now being built in Philadelphia. The Lexan windows are listed as "improvements"..... IRKED BY LACK of cooperation at UMTA for the proposed Dayton, Ohio light rail rapid transit project, Sen. Robert Taft, Jr. had some stinging words on UMTA's failure to develop a light rail national policy: "That is what the (UMTA) bureaucracy is too often about--avoidance of decision making, avoidance of responsibility, and ultimately, avoidance of the actions needed to solve the problems for which the bureaucracy was originally created". Taft said he would make UMTA's failure a "test case"..... NOVEMBER 1975 ISSUE of Apartment Life magazine contains an article on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and "10 Best Trains"..... OCCASIONAL RTN CONTRIBUTOR George Hyko reports that he was aboard the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR coming into Oakland Oct 18 (the first train that ran after the SP strike), and as it passed the Richmond BART station, where the Santa Fe crosses both BART and the SP, a Santa Fe freight on the parallel track crossed directly over the Amtrak train: "The big blue and yellow freight units went exactly over our dome car. It was a dramatic and unexpected sight, and I missed a picture I'll never see again, since I left my camera back in the other car." Which shows that you should always have your camera handy while riding, loaded and ready to shoot.....

* * *

THE BROADWAY LIMITED'S timekeeping has improved noticeably since Sept 1, reports a reader. The train has been only 30-45 minutes late frequently--ironic in the face of the new schedule that adds at least 95-110 minutes to the running time..... BLUEPRINTS OF A proposed rebuilding of the Penn Central 12th St. yard in Chicago have been seen by some. The yard would be vacated completely by Jan. 1977, with demolition of most existing structures. Then 12 months of construction. New yard would include an 8-story comissary-office building. This new "super" facility would be Amtrak's only yard in Chicago except for Brighton Park..... THE PENN CENTRAL will allow the LAKE SHORE LIMITED only 60mph on its reasonably well-maintained welded rail CTC mainline from Chicago eastward, points out a reader: "Having detoured on the BROADWAY LIMITED from Chicago to Cleveland, I found it evident that the ex-NYC mainline was good for at least 79mph, if not 90. Our detouring train made the 340 miles in about 5 hours!"..... THE SUNSET LIMITED'S stop at Benson, AZ occurs eastbound at 10:40am, westbound at 7:15pm, starting Oct 27. This is an experimental stop for one year, with no ticket sales or baggage checking.....

SENATOR LLOYD BENTSEN (D-Texas) said last month that ten Senators have joined his efforts to persude Amtrak to establish a daily Atlanta-Los Angeles route which would serve seven Texas cities. He said there is presently no east-west passenger service linking the vast area between Albuquerque and Atlanta..... DELAWARE AND HUDSON diner-lounges are again operating into NY's Grand Central Terminal on the ADIRONDACK. A D&H dining car crew operates from Montreal to Mechanicville, where an Amtrak crew, which boarded at Saratoga Springs, takes over..... AMTRAK RECENTLY DISPLAYED an Amcoach and an Amcafe at the Eastern States Exposition, a large regional fair held in West Springfield, MA. A generator in a baggage car provided lighting and air conditioning power. The display saw over 94,000 people in the 12 days of the exposition, a larger crowd than during the summer Colonial Corridor tour this year..... SOMETHING MUST BE done, we are told, to stop New Jersey from extending the PATH out to Plainfield, thereby destroying the CNJ. Readers who are interested in this controversy are invited to contact reader Simon L. Rosenbach, 338 Woodside Gardens, Roselle Park, NJ 07204. He would like to mobilize support for an upgraded CNJ, for better service at a smaller cost..... THE FIRST RUN of Amtrak's Chicago-St. Louis conventional train (with parlor car service), renamed the ABRAHAM LINCOLN, occured at 4:15pm on Oct 26. The train czrries a special Abe Lincoln drumhead on the rear of the parlor car, and got some good press coverage (see CARS & CONSISTS, page 10).....

* * *

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR once again connects in both directions with the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, effective with the Oct 26 time changes. Eastbound the train reaches Ogden at 4:55am (actually 5:55am Pacific time), a saner hour than before. Westbound it hits Ogden at 10:35pm and leaves at 11pm, allowing the RGZ to connect.....
A CONGRESSIONAL SPECIAL was run by Amtrak for a tour of Amtrak facilities. Cars left the East Oct 10 tacked on the rear of the NATIONAL LIMITED, after a tour of the Ben Salem, PA reservations center. Occupants detrained at Beech Grove for a toru of that facility, then rode a Turboliner from St. Louis to Springfield, and back on the Special to Chicago, returning to the East on the rear of the RILEY-MOUNTAINEER. Special cars used were Amtrak 2796, 2628, 8063, 3210, 2702, 2785, and Southern 19 "Buena Vista." Somewhere along the line PC business car 4 was added ..... STEAM GENERATOR CARS now being built by ICG in Paducah are to go onto trains 9-10, the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, this winter..... WITH DINING CAR crews cut in size, one report says that the SFZ waiters, now only 2 in number, had to serve about 400 riders recently, which necessitated running the diner until 1am, with long waits for a lot of passengers..... THE THRU TURBOLINER between Milwaukee and Detroit, inaugurated Oct 26, leaves Milwaukee at 11:45am, arrives Chicago 1:15, leabes 1:50, hits Detroit at 8:30pm. It departs Detroit at 11:30am,reaches Chicago at 4:05pm, leaves there at 4:30, and is in Milwaukee at 6:02pm.....

* * *

FREEDOM TRAIN UPDATE: Sparks, Nevada, instead of Reno will host the train Nov. 24-26 (the train pulls in the night of Nov 23), because the WP tracks that were tobe used in Reno were judged to be not strong enough for the massive train. And on Nov 11-14 the train will be on display in Portland, Oregon, where the 4449 steam engine was prepared for the trip. Some Portland enthusiasts are already talking up the possibility of keeping the engine active, perhaps for Amtrak excursions, etc. And in Montana this month, a group from Bozeman, Helena, Missoula and Billings was planning to stage a protest demonstration against the train, claiming that it was supported by big ripoff corporations and doesn't represent real freedom.....
BN BUSINESS CAR "Missouri River" was on the rear of the northbound MT. RAINIER leaving Portland Sept 25, writes David Bragdon. "The view from the great dome-diner-observation car, which was just added recently, was killed by 'Missouri River.' I don't know who was in it, but as it passed me pulling out, I could see that whoever the bigwig was, he was watching the 5:30 KATU news. Why wasn't it behind the engines?".....

THE FIRST ANNUAL National Conference for the Transportation Disadvantaged will be held Dec 3-5 at the Shoreham-Americana Hotel in Washington DC. Info from NCTD, Suite 206, 905 16th St. NW, Washington DC 20006..... AN ATTEMPT TO make Amtrak make public the minutes of its board meetings is being done in a suit brought by Washington Star reporter Stephen Aug, with assistance from NARP..... FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION and Carnegie-Mellon University are sponsoring a conference on improved passenger service in Pittsburgh Dec 2-4. Info from Richard A. Uher, Transportation Research Institute, Baker Hall 109C, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh..... VERMONT BICENTENNIAL PLAN: a followup report: in a drastic move, the special transportation committee set up to implement the VT2 Steam Expedition voted to cut the system to a one-train system. This move is undesirable from the standpoint of rail supporters, but the final verdict is not in yet..... THE SP STRIKE that began the evening of Oct 16 and affected Amtrak created the following service disruptions: both COAST STARLIGHTS were halted at Oakland; the westbound SFZ was stopped at Ogden; the westbound SUNSET LIMITED completed its run into Los Angeles after being delayed at Yuma. The strike started at 8pm on the 16th.....

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THE LOS BANOS, California former SP train station is for sale for anyone who will pay the costs of moving it..... MISSOURI PACIFIC DEPOT in San Antonio is to be turned into a World Trade Station, if the FRA comes thru with a grant for refurbishing the building. A San Antonio businessman is planning the venture.....
WILL GLENWOOD CANYON be destroyed by an interstate highway? It's likely a 4-lane monstrosity will tear thru the picturesque canyon travers3d gently by the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, unless Congress passes a bill exempting the area from interstate highway construction standards..... ITALIAN RAILWAY WORKERS went on strike early this month because they could not afford to eat in France, where their rail trips took them. The Rome-Paris and Milan-Lyon lines were reported disrupted..... AMTRAK HAS LOST its bid to keep more space in the Washington Union Station under construction into a National Visotors Center, and it will have to make do with less space there.....
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION of Illinois is expecting the bankruptcy of three more railroads--the ICG, the Milwaukee Road, and the C&NW..... THE PANAMA LIMITED becomes the SAINTS FOOTBALL SPECIAL on six dates this fall, when the train leaves New Orleans at 4:45pm and makes all stops between there and Memphis about 45minute behind the regular schedule. Dates are: Sept 28, Oct 12, Nov 2, Nov 16, Nov 23, Dec 7.....
MAIN STREET STATION in Richmond VA was abandoned by Amtrak, its last tenant, on Oct 15. Amtrk will use temporaily an old C&O station at Ellerson for the Newport News run, with a station on Staples Mill Road under construction. The historical landmark station now has an uncertain future. Its owner, the Chessie System, has a price tag of $500,000 on the building, which is said to be structurally unsound...
THE MAILING DATE of this issue has had to be delayed until Nov 3.....

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND RAIL LINE FUNDING

The Ford Administration announced Oct 20 that it has concluded that $4 billion is too much to spend for ultra-high speed Washington-Boston rail service, and instead a scaled-down $1 billion program of upgrading existing track will be pushed. The federal government would pay 90% of such upgrading, and the states the rest, with cities and states funding the rehabilitation of passenger stations. Rather than cutting the NY-Washington schedule to 2½ hours, the downwardly revised program would make a 3-hour running time "consistent and reliable." The smaller program includes extending electrified line from New Haven to Boston. An Amtrak spokesman offered no comment on the plan, indicating that it is up to lawmakers to decide how much money they want to invest in improving the Colonial Corridor.

In other news, The House voted late this month to give railroads $240 million for hiring unemployed workers to rebuild bad track. President Ford has indicated that he will veto this bill. The vote was 261-129.

Express Ads

DRAWING ROOMS ON AMTRAK! It's possible, on occasion, to travel in drawing room luxury at bedroom prices. For full information, contact "the train people" at GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, 9th Floor, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. And of course moneysaving "family plan" applies!

Louisville and Nashville and New Haven gold and nickel vest and uniform buttons, 60¢ each or all eight $4.50. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

LUXURIOUS open-platform lounge-observation car available to groups of 25 for Oakland/Reno fun trips. R/T cost for group of 25 - $59 ea. LA CONDESA, 969 Santa Ysabel, Baywood Park, CA 93402. Phone (805) 528-1002 6-11 p.m.

WANTED: PRR Shenango Mountain Laurel china. All types. Also PRR silverplate. William L. Staiger, 4160-A King George Drive, Harrisburg PA 17109.

THREE RAILFAN FUN-TRAINS--YOU'RE INVITED: #1 MEXICO (Jan 17-Feb 2) Mexico City, Veracruz (streetcars), Oaxaca, Puebla, Trip of Thousand Wonders. #2 WINTER SNOW (Feb 16-Mar 5) 9341 miles, Moffat Tunnel, Donner Pass, Rogers Pass, Cross Canada in Winter, Montreal, Adirondack, New York City, Bicentennial Philadelphia. #3 MEXICO (Mar 20-Apr 4) Acapulco, Taxco, Guadalajara, Copper Canyon Rail trip. Write for details: MIDWEST TRAVEL, 2936-R Bella Vista, Midwest City OK 73110.

1976 CHESAPEAKE & OHIO Calendar. Thirteen excellent steam and diesel photos from C&O's past and present; passenger and freight. Excellent reproduction on glossy stock. 11"x15" overall, 8½"x11" photos. $3.00; add 50¢ if First Class shipment desired. C&O Historical Newsletter, DEPT. DA, 6816 Fait Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224.

RIDE PRIVATE OBSERVATION "La Condesa" L.A. to San Diego Mon. Nov. 10. Limited space available to public at $25.00 per person. Also limited space Oakland to L.A. Friday Nov. 7 at $42.50 per person. Tickets from Bay Area Electric R.R. Ass'n., P.O. Box 3694, San Francisco 94119. (415) 673-6547.

RAILROAD MAPS--FREE!! (almost). Almost every state issues an "official" highway map for tourist use. Many (31 at last count) also include detailed rail routes for the entire state. My list supplies you with the address of every state's Tourism Department; they send you maps just for the asking. A postcard request will do. Hurry! Act now and save--US postcards cost you only 7¢ each until Dec 27! Send SASE and $1 to Paul Halbach; 1014 Laguna Ave., Los Angeles CA 90026.

Railroadiana for sale, Railroad rule books, Trains, Railroad & Railroad employee magazines, RR stationery, silverware, buttons, Books. Send SSE for list to Kenneth Schramm, 19129 Cheshire, Detroit MI 48236.

Let the busboys know exactly what you think of their anti-Amtrak ads. Write National Association of Motor Bus Owners, 1025 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington DC 20036. Use certified, return-receipt-requested mail for best results. Or call 202-293-5890. Also write your senator or congressman.

YOU CAN ADVERTISE in RTN's Special Fifth Anniversary Issue (1st Dec Issue), but to be assured of space, please place your order before Dec 1. ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads: 50¢ per line of 80 spaces. Display Ads: (camera-ready copy; small extra fee for setting up non-camera ready material) $25 per page (5x8), half page $12.50, quarter page $6.25. Rear cover, when available, $25 for 5x6 space. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Ad Dept., P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

SUBSCRIBE TO RTN--still only $8.00 per year for 24 twice-monthly issues, but the rate goes up Jan. 1. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

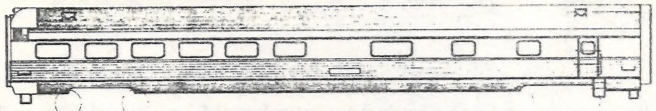
STILL AVAILABLE: Chesapeake & Ohio Lightweight Passenger Cars 1946-1972, a complete history of this giant order of cars, including Pere Marquette, Chessie and C&O Mainline equipment. Rosters, final dispositions (AMTRAK Nos), history, diagrams, photos. $3.00 postpaid. C&O Historical Newsletter, P.O. Box 417, Alderson, WV 24910.

Colorado Midland 1902 timetable reprint, most colorful ever issued in Colorado, Indian on horseback, etc. $1.25 postpaid. Many other Colorado reprints. Colorado Railroad Museum, Box 10, Golden, Colo. 80401.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCESS ITSELF, OF PASSENGER ROUTES ON AND OFF AS WILL BE DECIDED ALONE BY AMTRAK ITSELF, IS NOW IN THE VERY PROCESS OF BEING SET. WOW!! REALLY!! The Congress initiated the procedure in their amendments this year. You will want to compare a State's recourse under sections 403(b), 404(b)(3) and 404(c)(3). You need every PRECISE definition, every cross reference in the Law, every detail in the initiating process. Expediting the improvement of low-cost rail transit, the public transit catalyst thanks you for remaining an informed, effective WATCHDOG of this MAJESTIC DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. Final copies of the UPDATED AMTRAK LAW are available at $6 from Robert J. Swan, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801.

FOR THE KIDS FOR CHRISTMAS -- 28 page storybook to color. "STEAMY" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. His adventures on the ex-D&RGW narrow gauge will give youngsters a feel for Rocky Mountain railroading as it was. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

Railway Passenger Car Annual



Volume II 1975

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